

Message Text

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UNCLAS DAMASCUS 4813

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSI, SY

SUBJECT: FSI: COMMERCIAL LOCALS' US TRAINING PROGRAM

REF: STATE 156551

1. EMBASSY NOMINATES MOHAMMED BASHIR NOTAFGI, FSL-3, COMMERCIAL SPECIALIST, FOR SIX-WEEK US TRAINING PROGRAM BEGINNING OCTOBER 4.

2. BIO DATA: NOTAFGI BORN DAMASCUS, SYRIA MARCH 9, 1932. HE HAS WORKED FOURTEEN YEARS FOR USG: 1955-67, USIS/DAMASCUS LIBRARIAN, EXHIBITS SPECIALIST, AND MODERATOR OF MUSIC PROGRAM; 1974-DATE, EMBASSY COMMERCIAL SPECIALIST. DURING BREAK IN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS (1967-74) NOTAFGI WORKED FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF DAMASCUS, FIRST AS CHIEF OF THE CORRESPONDENCE SECTION OF THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE, AND LATER AS UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR EAST GERMAN LOAN TO MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR PURCHASE OF SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE UNIVERSITY. AT THE SAME TIME, HE EARNED A BA IN ENGLISH. WITH REOPENING OF EMBASSY IN JUNE, 1974, NOTAFGI RETURNED TO NEW POST IN ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL UNIT. HIS HEALTH IS EXCELLENT AND ENGLISH FLUENT.

3. NOTAFGI ATTENDED THE BEIRUT REGIONAL SEMINAR FOR FSL COMMERCIAL SPECIALISTS (MAY 5-9, 1975). HE IS PRESENTLY ENROLLED IN THE USDOC CORRESPONDENCE COURSE FOR FSL COMMERCIAL SPECIALISTS AND EXPECTS TO COMPLETE UNCLASSIFIED

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THE COURSE BEFORE OCTOBER.

4. EMBASSY STRONGLY URGES NOTAFGI'S INCLUSION IN OCTOBER TRAINING PROGRAM BECAUSE OF HIS SUPERIOR WORK PERFORMANCE TO DATE AND CAPACITY TO MAKE AN EVEN GREATER CONTRIBUTION IN FUTURE TO EMBASSY ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL OBJECTIVES IN GENERAL AND EXPORT PROMOTION IN PARTICULAR. HE HAS GIVEN VALUABLE SUPPORT TO THREE DUSEX'S SINCE US RESUMED PARTICIPATION IN DAMASCUS INTERNATIONAL FAIR IN 1974. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SYRIAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND SARG TRADE AND ECONOMIC OFFICIALS HAS INVALUABLY AIDED THE EMBASSY E/C SECTION TO REBUILD ITS CONTACT FILE, WHICH HAD LAIN FALLOW FOR SEVEN YEARS. HIS EXCELLENT ENGLISH (AND ARABIC) HAS MADE HIM THE EMBASSY'S PRINCIPAL TRANSLATOR OF DIPLOMATIC NOTES, AND HE REGULARLY INTERPRETS AT MEETINGS AND RECEPTIONS FOR VISITING US BUSINESSMEN AND USG OFFICIALS. NOTAFGI'S EXCELLENT JOB PERFORMANCE AND INCREASED RESPONSIBILITIES WON HIM A TWO-GRADE JOB CLASSIFICATION INCREASE (FSL-5 TO FSL-3) ON MARCH 24, 1976.

5. NOTAFGI INTERESTED IN FOLLOWING INDUSTRY/ PRODUCT CATEGORIES, AS EMBASSY HAS IDENTIFIED THEM AS HAVING EXCELLENT EXPORT POTENTIAL FOR SYRIA: PETROLEUM EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES, AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT AND IRRIGATION SYSTEMS, MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND HEALTH SERVICES, FOOD PROCESSING AND PRESERVATION, HOUSING AND URBAN PLANNING, AND MATERIALS HANDLING EQUIPMENT. HE IS INTERESTED IN ITINERARY WHICH WOULD PERMIT HIM TO VISIT LOCATIONS OF THESE INDUSTRIES. NOTAFGI ALSO INTERESTED IN MEETING US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, TRADE ASSOCIATION OFFICIALS IN ORDER TO INFORM HIMSELF HOW THESE PRIVATE SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS MIGHT HELP PROMOTE US EXPORTS TO SYRIA.

6. RE: PARAS 7-9 REFTTEL: NOTAFGI IS ONLY FSL COMMERCIAL SPECIALIST AT THIS POST, SO WE WILL NOT BE FOLLOWING UP WITH RANKING OF NOMINEES.
MURPHY

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